

A REPORT ON THE JAPANESE LIBRARIANS' WORKSHOP AND CEAL MEETINGS HELD IN BOSTON, MARCH 1999, WITH COMMENTS ABOUT EAST ASIAN LIBRARIES VISITED WHILE IN THE US

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Introduction

The University of Melbourne Library granted me special leave from March 7 to 23 to attend the Japanese Library Workshop and CEAL (Council of East Asian Libraries) meetings which were held in Boston as a part of the American Association for Asian Studies conference, March 10 to 14, 1999. In addition I visited many East Asian Collections of other world-class universities, to learn more about their holdings, their plans and methods of using electronic databases, their reference collection recommendations, and to make contacts which may be useful to us here in the somewhat isolated Japanese Library world in Australia.

CEAL (Council on East Asian Libraries) meetings

<http://www.pitt.edu/~snoguchi/cjmw/home.htm>

(click "Committee Annual Meetings 1999" in the left frame)

Committee on Japanese Materials

- "Electronic library plan for the NDL and its projects related to image databases"

The National Diet Library in Tokyo is digitising its collection of rare books and manuscripts. When each piece is finished and mounted on the Web (see the NDL website) there will be no access to these materials in person again. I was fortunate to have seen these materials when at the NDL as a participant of the JF/NDL Japanese Librarians' Training Course in January this year, and while I am saddened that few people will ever get the chance to see them as I did, putting such rare and valuable items on the Internet is one way of ensuring that a large number of people can view them at any time and at no risk of damage to the originals.

In addition, the NDL is in the process of scanning in white papers in English, and is creating a digital library of children's books, the full text of Diet reports, and non-English, non-Japanese catalogue cards.

The NDL continues to tantalise us with hints that its entire database (which has been completely converted to computer-readable form, from Meiji holdings onward) will soon be available online, from the library's homepage. I first heard in January that it would be available by April, and nothing seems to have developed since.

- **Report on JF/NDL Librarians' Training Course 1999**

A report on the training course was given by one of the American participants. I have already written of this in the no. 39 May 1999 edition of the EARLGA newsletter, so I will not go into further detail here.

- **Japan Foundation Library Support Grants**

It was reported that very few US libraries take advantage of this wonderful resource of a donation program by the Japan Foundation. In fact in the previous year only 3 applications had been received, where the norm had been 20-25 each year. This is compared with 8 applications for the same period here in Australia. The reason given was that two years ago there had been a lot of moving around - people retiring, others moving to fill their positions - and the application does require some work to put together, and would be a low priority for new staff. At the University of Melbourne we have been remarkably successful in each application, and at the risk of cutting my own potential support I encourage those of you who do not apply to do so next year. The applications close on December 1st, and more information can be obtained from the Japan Foundation's Sydney office.

Committee on Library Technology

As a result of electronic access, will we see the end of the book? The end of the Librarian? The end of the library? Kristina Kade Troost, of Duke University, suggested that now was the time for our true worth to shine forth. Technology and its proper use adds value to our skills and subject expertise, for example, how to decide what is useful in an electronic list of thousands of citations. The opportunities for personal service will grow, for example, alerting academic staff to new information and helping keep them up to date. Our language skills are increasingly valued. This sort of approach helps to avoid the "vanilla" or uniform collection outcome. There is a need for experts who are able to select items which suit academic staff's and the

university's needs. Technology also speeds up the work we do, and the amount to be done, but also allows us to provide more information than ever before, and to people more widely spread than just our own university. We are able to access answers to harder questions.

However, according to other speakers, the information revolution has come a little differently to East Asian libraries. Owing to the need for special scripts and input methods, information technology has widened the gap between the East Asian Collection and the parent libraries in the use of available technology. Something to be worked on!

Research Libraries Group

A very interesting discussion about Grey Literature, and who collects it. There is a Japan Documentation Center within the Library of Congress, which was set up with special funding to collect such materials but unfortunately funding runs out in May 2000 and so far its future has not been resolved.

The materials held here are:

- *Collected from both government and private sources
- *Difficult-to-obtain unpublished literature, usually referred to as "grey literature"(policy studies and reports, white papers and annual reports, draft legislation, think-tank reports, public opinion polls, conference proceedings).
- *Up-to-date source materials: The staff in Tokyo keeps direct and close contact with and collects materials from government departments and various agencies. These materials are sent to JDC by air mail, express mail or even by fax, to provide speedy delivery of up-to-the minute information to researchers.
- *Approximately 95% of the materials are in Japanese: The remainder are in English. An English abstract is created for each document to help users determine the contents of the Japanese materials.

(<http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/jdc/search.html>)

RLIN CJK Users group discussion

(Essentially technical concerns which I will not talk about here. I will speak to library staff later.)

Japanese Librarians' Workshop

The goal of the Workshop was to provide an opportunity for junior and mid-career Japanese Studies librarians in North America to gain practical knowledge and hands-on experience in some of the most important aspects of Japanese Studies librarianship. The Workshop included nine courses over two days, which covered a diverse range of topics, reflecting the multi-faceted training needs of our rapidly changing field. In Harvard-Yenching Library lecture hall, reading room, and the UIS Computer Training Center environment, twenty six participants, along with locally participating Harvard librarians, were exposed to critical issues and concerns, and had the opportunity to learn new skills from five instructors from Japan and eight instructors from North America.

<http://www.pitt.edu/~snoguchi/cjmw/home.htm>
(click "Committee Workshop 1999" in the left frame)

- Writing Effective Grant Proposals

Perhaps not so important to many, but there was deemed a need for particularly non-native speakers of English to see what a good proposal was like, and the need to justify the request rather than to say "this is what I want". It is always useful to go back to the basics and such a seminar could well be included in future JSAA programs to good effect, I think.

- The Electronic Library: what can be done by transforming library materials into digital format?

Graphic databases for cultural studies are not used much because of a lack of search methods and a lack of a theoretical background. At Nichibunken (The Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto) they are currently working on three projects:

1. a database of foreign images of Japan
2. a database of early photographs of Japan
3. a 3-D virtual archive

At this stage you need to register and get a password to be able to view the databases, at: <http://www.nichibun.ac.jp>

In addition, Dr Masako Ema Watanabe gave a very intriguing presentation of a video Nichibunken is currently working on. It is a pictorial depiction called "Rakuchu Rakugai Sampo", which is gradually being animated to show a 3-D vision of what life was like at that time. They are still working on it and hope to have it finished in 2 years or so. I can strongly recommend that if you get

the chance to see this video, even in its current incomplete form, it will really show you the possibilities of technology for Japanese Studies.

- **Cataloguing Japanese Materials**

A very interesting seminar which catapulted me back to my first cataloguing class at library school. Various "homework" had been circulated to participants by e-mail in February, and we went over the answers together. Hideyuki Morimoto, of UC Berkeley, convened the seminar and is an excellent example to us all for his flawless cataloguing skills.

- **Japanese Language Research Tools on the Web**

With the explosion of information available over the Internet, it is critical that Japanese Studies librarians become familiar with Japanese language research tools on the Web. In this class, Ms. Mihoko Miki provided an introduction to some of these important tools, utilising the links she had created on her Japanese studies Web page at UCLA.

- **Working with Japanese and your systems people**

Mr Rob Britt, University of Washington spoke about how using Japanese on North American computer systems for library work presents many unique problems, and Japanese librarian all too often experience problems in working with the computer systems professionals assigned to assist them. This session addressed the development of computer systems for Japanese library work, discussed its great improvements and remaining limitations, and offered suggestions for how to work towards successful use of technology within the context of library computer systems for Japanese information in North America.

- **Finding relevant information in Japanese newspapers**

Ms. Sharon Domier, University of Massachusetts, with a guest presenter, Dr. Jonathan Lewis, Institute for Social Sciences (Shaken), University of Tokyo.

What is the best way to find Japanese newspaper information? This class explored available English and Japanese online newspaper indexes. It also included an introduction to the Asahi Shinbun Clippings Database offered by the Institute of Social Sciences (Shaken) at the University of Tokyo by Professor Lewis.

<http://www.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp>

- Book Acquisition: from Using the Web for Selection to Used Book Vendors in Japan / Sachié Noguchi, University of Pittsburgh

How can print and Web resources be used effectively for selection work? This class covered Japanese publishing environment, and introduced various aspects of selecting and acquiring Japanese materials. It illustrated the tools (both print and electronic) and approaches available.

- Resources for Reference in the Humanities and Social Sciences: how to solve real-life reference questions

Politics, Economics, and Statistics / Ms. Izumi Koide, International House of Japan; General and Humanities / Ms. Yasuko Makino, Princeton University; and Education, Sociology, and History / Mr. Eizaburo Okuizumi, University of Chicago

What are the best sources to use to answer those difficult reference questions? This class focused on solving real-life reference questions through the assignment, which were sent to the participants in February. It offered reference interview tips and basic coverage of the most important reference resources for humanities and the social sciences.

- Japanese Rare Books / Prof. Jun Suzuki, National Institute of Japanese Literature (Kokubungaku Kenkyu Shiriyokan)

This was a unique opportunity to learn about the identification, treatment and handling of Japanese rare books and materials from an expert in the field, using concrete examples from the Japanese rare book collection of the Harvard-Yenching Library.

The Workshop also offered an opportunity for Japanese studies librarians to get to know each other as colleagues and friends, and to share and learn from each other's practical experience. A special effort was made to provide unofficial time for relaxed communication and networking during the lunches and dinner sponsored by the Workshop.

The Workshop was immensely successful. Hyperlinks to selected presentation papers, slides, and hand-outs from the sessions in the Workshop have been embedded on the CEAL Japanese page. The Workshop homepage can be used as a guide to Japanese studies librarianship or a handbook for Japanese studies librarians by colleagues not only in North America, but worldwide. The report of the Workshop will be submitted for inclusion in the Journal of East Asian Libraries.

Other libraries visited

University of California, Berkeley, San Francisco
(<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/EAL/>)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston
(<http://web.mit.edu/afs/athena.mit.edu/org/f/fll/www/languages/Japanese.html>)

Harvard University, Boston (<http://hcl.harvard.edu/harvard-yenching/>)

Documentation Center on Contemporary Japan
(<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~rijs/dcj2.html>)

Columbia University, New York (C.V.Starr East Asian Library)
(<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/indiv/eastasian/>)

Library of Congress, Washington DC

- Asian Reading Room
(<http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/asian/coll.html#japanese>)

- Japan Documentation Center
(<http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/jdc/>)

- Main Reading Room
(<http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/main/>)

Georgetown University, Washington DC
(<http://www.library.georgetown.edu/>)

Freer Gallery of Asian Art Library, Washington DC (<http://www.si.edu/asia/>)
Japanese Rare Book workshop to be held Jan 2000
US mirror site of JAC (Japan Art Catalogue) Library

Both attending the conference and visiting the libraries were a terrific way to meet others of my profession, and it is a relief to see that although they have much larger collections than I manage, we still have many of the same problems. Some examples of these common problems are: budget decreases, having to cut serials, using online and electronic databases creates a situation where all libraries are very much the same in what they offer. This last point in particular was very interesting to me, and reinforced the importance of maintaining a good, relevant bookstock as one of the important parts of collection management.

One further question I had hoped to find information about was how I could be truly useful to my library users given the small collection I manage and the limited resources at hand. I was especially interested in the Reference collections in these larger libraries, and I was pleasantly surprised to learn that in each library when I asked the librarian in charge what he or she would call the "essential" items to have in a Japanese Reference collection, they repeatedly mentioned items which we have here in the Melbourne collection. It was a reinforcement to me of the choices I had made in purchasing, and also reflects on the expertise of those who have preceded me in this position. Although we are small, we are a useful and relevant collection. There is, however, no cause to stop here, but to continue in this vein.

It was useful to see how active their national association was, and to aspire to the same thing here. Currently there are few specifically Japanese studies librarians in Australia, and I am sure we will never have the numbers and resulting influence of the American group, but I am inspired to attempt to do the best for Australian users of Japanese collections here through strengthening JALRGA (Japanese Library Research Group of Australia). This I hope will take place here at the JSAA (Japanese Studies Association of Australia) Biennial Conference, and I hope all of you will participate in our other meetings scheduled for today and go back to your universities and tell your colleagues about what we do and how we hope to be of assistance.

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Introduction

Aibo the Gromit is the world's first artificial intelligent entertainment robot produced by Sony. The name Aibo, literally means "a good companion" in Japanese. Aibo was unveiled on the internet, selling 3000 in Japan (being sold out within 30 minutes) and 2000 in the US for US\$2500 each. Aibo is equipped with a 64 bit 100 MHz processor with 16 MB of memory. He sees through a 180,000 pixel digital camera in his nose and hears through stereo microphones in his ears. A multitude of motors allows him 18 degrees of movement and an 8 MB flashcard stores his experiences to allow his intelligent to develop. He should grow over time in mind, from a cyber pup to an intelligent "Techno Terrier". Since he can be operated by remote control, an Aibo conspiracy theory has developed: that somewhere in Japan a man controls all the Aibo the Gromit robots and is spying on Aibo's 5000 owners around the world.

Whether or not you believe this story, according to some newspaper articles there is a rumor that the National Security Council in the US is watching over Aibo market closely and Aibo the Gromit robots have been banned from the Pentagon. The conspiracy theory is that a Japanese businessman is paying a fortune to spy on Aibo the Gromit owners around the world.